

RECREATION FOR THE BLIND
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PROJECT PROGRESS.
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Fraternity Project



Recreation for the Blind

✚ OF ALL the phases of work for the Blind, recreation is perhaps the most difficult to accomplish successfully. In the educational field, the aims and needs are definite and uniform, and require certain treatment, but the pleasure of a handicapped group is a more personal thing, and depends upon the clear understanding of each person.

Although Iowa has a large rural population, and the groups are scattered and small, there is throughout the state, in many towns, organized effort towards providing recreation. In one place workers teach weaving and belt making at their social gatherings. The usual summer picnics, Christmas parties, and periodic dinners are given under the auspices of some civic group, or in a few cases by the Blind themselves, when there is a center for such activities.

One of the most successful ventures in recreation has been the summer camp. This seems to fill a special need to get away from the drab surroundings in which the Blind often find themselves. The Des Moines alumnae, as has been previously stated, paid for a recreational director last year, and planned on doing so this year, but as it turned out, the Salvation Army, which directs the camp, did not need help.

The Dayton chapter has been one of the most successful in all recreational lines. They have been active in a camp period with better results even than Des Moines for they intend to make it a yearly event.

Dayton has a list of accomplishments to be proud of, such as sponsoring dramatic and choral programs—put on by the Blind—by selling tickets and ushering. They also served at monthly dinners, prepared, and furnished a dinner for the entire group at Christmas time, gave them a set of china

and silver ware, a second hand piano, a radio, and a victrola, besides satin evening gowns for the women in the choral group, all of which makes an imposing list of "good deeds"! Mrs. James Burnett of the chapter, reports that through the work they have been drawn much closer together.

Perhaps the most constructive ideas we can pass on have been gained from Iowa's able and interested director, Ethel Towne Holmes. Her idea is that, though the more obvious forms of entertainment are taken care of by civic groups, there is a real need for more individual service which would cost little or nothing except time and unselfish effort, and which would mean much to the Blind. These services would include calling for a blind woman and taking her shopping. Even though the Blind buy little, Mrs. Holmes assures us that they love to go through the stores and have things described to them. (The ten cent stores are a favorite spot.) They enjoy automobile rides too, especially if the guide points out little things of interest to be found on the route. Small picnics was another suggestion. The Blind can enjoy music; hence if someone has a couple of tickets it would be a real kindness to give them to a blind person, and furnish the necessary guide.

If any chapter feels all the money it can raise must go to help a new chapter in its district, could it not easily form a service committee and let them, on request, find a car, a guide, a cheerful picnicker, or whatever is needed, at the time? That would give a real service for little cost, other than effort and would help also to give Delta Gammas a share in the Fraternity project a worth while boost.

RUTH SNYDER MORRIS, *Tax*

(see over)

Project Progress

⚓ THE Delta Gamma Fraternity Project, Aiding the Blind, has completed its third year during which time the alumnae groups have engaged in an intensive study and investigation of work being done in this field by other organizations, and of the possibilities for work to be carried on by Delta Gamma.

Many of the alumnae groups have discovered work in their immediate localities; others have coöperated with established organizations such as the Red Cross, the Lions Club, and the Lighthouse for the Blind.

The following brief summary will give an idea of the character and diversity of the local work now being done by Delta Gamma.

Personal aid work, visiting, reading to and furnishing transportation for blind persons, is carried on by the majority of the groups.

Chapters have met the needs of the adult blind by providing Braille typewriters, copies of the Bible and the *Reader's Digest* in Braille, looms, recreational rooms, glasses, glass eyes, operations and medical care.

The groups in Southern California are supporting the Delta Gamma Nursery School for Blind Babies established in Los Angeles. This is the only school of its kind in the West.

In Iowa and Ohio, our members are interested in recreation for the Blind. One camp director was paid by the Des Moines chapter, and the Dayton chapter sent a group of adult blind to summer camp.

Many groups have sold products made by the Blind, and three groups are working with blind Girl Scout Troops.

In the field of education, a certain amount of work has been done. Records, law briefs, and typewriters have been secured for blind college students. The cost of readers has been met, clothes have been provided, and loans have been arranged.

Prevention of blindness is of increasing interest to the Fraternity. The chapters in Minneapolis and Chicago have donated money to local organizations doing this type of work.

A campaign has been started to provide proper lighting in chapter houses.

The Delta Gamma project is, at present, being carried on under the direction of two committees; the Province Committee composed of one member from each of the seven provinces and a general chairman, and General Committee of seven located in Berkeley, California.

Information of general interest to the alumnae groups and suggestions for local work has been sent out each year with requests for stated reports on work accomplished. These reports can not be too greatly stressed. Only in this way are the committees able to keep a continuous record of activities throughout the Fraternity. The last reports show that definite well-established work for the Blind is being carried on successfully by seventy per cent of the alumnae groups.

Through the department "Project Progress" in THE ANCHORA the committees have endeavored to provide information concerning the work of the alumnae groups. Articles have appeared in THE ANCHORA entitled "Prevention of Blindness," "The History of Braille," and the "Los Angeles Nursery School."

Appearing soon will be articles, "Recreation for the Blind" and "Legislation for the Blind."

The response on the part of the alumnae delegates at the 1938 Convention was very interesting and stimulating. It is hoped that at the 1940 Convention the Fraternity will find that even greater progress has been made and that a bright future is in store for the Project.

JANE HAWK SCHUESSLER, *Gamma Project Chairman*

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